

The New York Times

June 7, 2005

## An Editor in the White House

Handwritten revisions and comments by Philip A. Cooney, chief of staff for the White House Council on Environmental Quality, appear on two draft reports by the Climate Change Science Program and the Subcommittee on Global Change Research. Mr. Cooney's changes were incorporated into later versions of each document, shown below with revisions in bold.

"STRATEGIC PLAN FOR THE U.S. CLIMATE CHANGE SCIENCE PROGRAM," DRAFT TEXT, OCT. 2002

- 14 wetlands will expand in areas where meltwater resulting from deeper and longer thaw  
15 periods do not have a natural drainage path to the ocean.  
16  
17 Warming will also cause reductions in mountain glaciers and advance the timing of the melt  
18 of mountain snow packs in polar regions. In turn, runoff rates will change and flood  
19 potential will be altered in ways that are currently not well understood. There will be  
20 significant shifts in the seasonality of runoff that will have serious impacts on native  
21 populations that rely on fishing and hunting for their livelihood. These changes will be  
22 further complicated by shifts in precipitation regimes and a possible intensification and  
23 increased frequency of extreme hydrologic events. Reducing the uncertainties in current  
24 understanding of the relationships between climate change and Arctic hydrology is critical

staying from  
research  
strategy with  
speculative  
findings missing  
here.

PUBLIC REVIEW DRAFT, NOV. 2002

Warming could also lead to changes in the water cycle in polar regions. Reducing the uncertainties ...

FINAL REPORT, JULY 2003

The paragraph does not appear in the final report.

"OUR CHANGING PLANET," DRAFT TEXT, OCT. 2002

- 019 the next, and perhaps even beyond.  
020 The challenge for the USGCRP is to provide the best possible scientific basis for documenting,  
021 diagnosing, and projecting changes in the Earth's life-support systems, and the role for CCRI is to  
022 facilitate full use of this scientific information in policy and decisionmaking on response strategies  
023 for adaptation and mitigation at the international, national, and regional scales. possible  
024  
025

- 026 From "Discovery" to "Comparative Analysis"  
027 Because of the scientific accomplishments of USGCRP and other research programs during the  
028 last decade, a period that could be termed a productive "period of discovery and characterization,"  
029 the CCRI, in coordination with the USGCRP, will move into a new "period of comparative  
030 analysis of response strategies." In this new phase of the climate science programs, information  
031 that compares the potential consequences of different responses to global changes, including  
032 climate change, will be developed in a form useful to national debate and decisionmaking. This  
033

understanding

reduce the significant  
remaining uncertainties  
associated with human-  
induced  
climate  
change  
and

FINAL REPORT, 2003

The challenge for the USGCRP is to provide the best possible scientific basis for documenting, understanding, and projecting changes in the Earth's life-support systems, and the role for CCRI is to **reduce the significant remaining uncertainties associated with human-induced climate change** and facilitate full use of scientific information in policy and decisionmaking on **possible** response strategies for adaptation and mitigation.

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July 27, 2006

OP-ED CONTRIBUTOR

## Cold, Hard Facts

By PETER DORAN

### Correction Appended

Chicago

IN the debate on global warming, the data on the climate of Antarctica has been distorted, at different times, by both sides. As a polar researcher caught in the middle, I'd like to set the record straight.

In January 2002, a research paper about Antarctic temperatures, of which I was the lead author, appeared in the journal *Nature*. At the time, the Antarctic Peninsula was warming, and many people assumed that meant the climate on the entire continent was heating up, as the Arctic was. But the Antarctic Peninsula represents only about 15 percent of the continent's land mass, so it could not tell the whole story of Antarctic climate. Our paper made the continental picture more clear.

My research colleagues and I found that from 1986 to 2000, one small, ice-free area of the Antarctic mainland had actually cooled. Our report also analyzed temperatures for the mainland in such a way as to remove the influence of the peninsula warming and found that, from 1966 to 2000, more of the continent had cooled than had warmed. Our summary statement pointed out how the cooling trend posed challenges to models of Antarctic climate and ecosystem change.

Newspaper and television reports focused on this part of the paper. And many news and opinion writers linked our study with another bit of polar research published that month, in *Science*, showing that part of Antarctica's ice sheet had been thickening — and erroneously concluded that the earth was not warming at all. "Scientific findings run counter to theory of global warming," said a headline on an editorial in *The San Diego Union-Tribune*. One conservative commentator wrote, "It's ironic that two studies suggesting that a new Ice Age may be under way may end the global warming debate."

In a rebuttal in *The Providence Journal*, in Rhode Island, the lead author of the *Science* paper and I explained that our studies offered no evidence that the earth was cooling. But the misinterpretation had already become legend, and in the four and half years since, it has only grown.

Our results have been misused as "evidence" against global warming by Michael Crichton in his novel "State of Fear" and by Ann Coulter in her latest book, "Godless: The Church of Liberalism." Search my

name on the Web, and you will find pages of links to everything from climate discussion groups to Senate policy committee documents — all citing my 2002 study as reason to doubt that the earth is warming. One recent Web column even put words in my mouth. I have never said that “the unexpected colder climate in Antarctica may possibly be signaling a lessening of the current global warming cycle.” I have never thought such a thing either.

Our study did find that 58 percent of Antarctica cooled from 1966 to 2000. But during that period, the rest of the continent was warming. And climate models created since our paper was published have suggested a link between the lack of significant warming in Antarctica and the ozone hole over that continent. These models, conspicuously missing from the warming-skeptic literature, suggest that as the ozone hole heals — thanks to worldwide bans on ozone-destroying chemicals — all of Antarctica is likely to warm with the rest of the planet. An inconvenient truth?

Also missing from the skeptics’ arguments is the debate over our conclusions. Another group of researchers who took a different approach found no clear cooling trend in Antarctica. We still stand by our results for the period we analyzed, but unbiased reporting would acknowledge differences of scientific opinion.

The disappointing thing is that we are even debating the direction of climate change on this globally important continent. And it may not end until we have more weather stations on Antarctica and longer-term data that demonstrate a clear trend.

In the meantime, I would like to remove my name from the list of scientists who dispute global warming. I know my coauthors would as well.

**Correction:**

*An Op-Ed article on Thursday, about the use of climate studies, included an incorrect date. A study found that part of Antarctica cooled from 1986 to 2000, not 1996 to 2000.*

*Peter Doran is an associate professor of earth and environmental sciences at the University of Illinois at Chicago.*

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